



DESERT EVIL DISPATCH

Vol. 2, No. 4

Serving the men and women of Regional Command East, Operation Enduring Freedom - Afghanistan

Aug. 14, 2005

All American 6 visits Task Force Devil troops

Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke
Editor

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan- Maj. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV, 82nd Airborne Division commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Wolf Amacker, 82nd Airborne Division command sergeant major, took time last week to tour Regional Command East, Afghanistan, and visit the 82nd paratroopers who are operating in the area under

Combined Task Force Devil. CTF Devil is built around the 82nd's 1st Brigade Combat Team and the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

Caldwell and Amacker visited with troops from Bagram Air Field, Forward Operating Base Salerno, Forward Operating Base Red Falcon North, the towns of Gardez and Gahzni during the trip.

The Division commander and command sergeant major took time to reenlist paratroopers from the task

force at almost all the locations visited. He also took the time to address the troopers concerns on everything from new uniforms to deployment timelines.

"We are working the issue of getting you guys the ACU (advanced combat uniform)," Amacker said.

He went on to describe how difficult it was to field the new uniforms to Task Force Red Falcon which recently rapidly deployed to Afghanistan to boost elec-

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Maj. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV, 82nd Airborne Division commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Wolf Amacker, Division command sergeant major, address paratroopers from 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment in Gardez, Afghanistan.

Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke

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Mid-tour leave: It is all in what you make it

Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke
Editor

As the months of 1st Brigade's deployment to Afghanistan drag on, many of you may be preparing and looking forward to your well-earned mid-tour leave. I can't help myself but look forward to the relaxing days of good food, a few drinks and time spent with loved ones.

However, after three deployments to the war on terror I have become wary and cautious of what I will face when going home after spending a good deal of time away.

As a young private first class I returned home from a tour in Afghanistan to a whirlwind of family and friend reunions, and the plans that those reunions entailed.

I can remember specifically one instance where some friends and I decided to attend an Oakland A's baseball game. What started out as a small group of four or five friends heading to a ball game turned into a major event where I was caught organizing the purchasing of tickets and transportation issues for more than 10 people.

I spent more time planning that event than most commanders do on operations in the conflict I just came from!

After a series of blunders, the end result was our arrival to the game late in the 5th inning with some of our friends left outside the stadium thanks to a ticket foul-up.

I had forgotten that the vacation time that I had longed for was MY vacation time. It wasn't more than a week before I was exhausted and couldn't wait to

return to Fort Bragg, N.C., and get back to work.

Even so, I felt obligated to visit every one of the well-wishers that offered so much support while I was deployed. After all, they viewed me and others in the military, as American heroes. Who was I to be rude and not thank them for supporting the troops?

During my tour in Iraq, I vowed to myself that whatever time off I

received upon returning to the states I would do things differently. I set out a plan for myself to get the most out of my two and a half days of vacation I earned each month. That plan included having a lack of plans.

I made sure that those people that meant most to me understood that I wanted to spend time with them and visit with them, but I was going to vacation on my terms.

It can be a tough thing for some family and friends to understand, but it helps if you explain to them that during a "block leave" or mid-tour, there will be plenty of time for them to get involved with what you want to do.

For me it worked out fine. Day trips to amusement parks and beaches turned into days with friends stopping by to lounge around the swimming pool with me, or an extra few helping hands

while wrenching on my car.

Some of you may want to scratch

"I had forgotten that the vacation time that I had longed for was MY vacation time. It wasn't more than a week before I was exhausted and couldn't wait to return to Fort Bragg, N.C."

-Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke
Editor

going "home" for leave completely off your list. As I left advanced individual training, I remember my commander suggesting that I be sure to not spend all my leave days going home.

"There is unique opportunities for you in the Army to travel to places you normally wouldn't get to visit on a vacation," he said.

At the time I thought he was crazy, but after a few less than relaxing "vacations" at home I think I might just be ready for some sandy beaches and palm trees.

Whatever I decide I will be sure to make the most of my vacation by enjoying the one thing I've missed the most about being away; the opportunity to just kick back and relax with nothing to do and no where to be.

My final advice would be to just take it slow and enjoy the little things you have found you missed most during deployment. Doing so will help you come back refreshed and recharged to finish your mission here in Afghanistan.

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To view back issues of the *Desert Devil Dispatch*, visit http://www.bragg.army.mil/afvc-a/desert_devil_dispatches.htm

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Rangers honor two fallen comrades

Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke
Editor

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan- Special operations Soldiers stationed at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan, paid tribute to two of their fallen comrades during a sunset memorial ceremony Aug. 8.

Pfc. Damian J. Garza and Pfc. John M. Henderson, both of 3rd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, Fort Benning, Ga., were killed when the vehicle they were riding in Aug. 5, plunged into a river while conducting an infiltration as part of a special operations mission in eastern Afghanistan.

It was the second tour Garza had served in Afghanistan and Henderson's first deployment in the war on terror.

Both were remembered as proud Rangers who joined the Army after Sept. 11, 2001, knowing they would deploy in support of the global war on terror.

Garza's awards and deco-



Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke

The memorials for Pfc. Damian J. Garza and Pfc. John M. Henderson Aug. 8, at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan. Garza and Henderson were killed when the vehicle they were riding in plunged into a river during operations.

rations include the Army Commendation Medal, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Combat Infantryman Badge and Parachutist Badge.

Henderson's awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal, Good Conduct Medal,

See "Memorial" page 9

Representatives visit Sharana PRT

Spc. Laura E. Griffin
Assistant Editor

SHARANA PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM, Afghanistan - House Representatives from Georgia, Guam, Kentucky and Texas came to visit Sharana Provincial Reconstruction Team July 11 as part of a congressional delegation.

Representatives Lynn Westmoreland from Georgia, Madeleine Bordallo from Guam, Geoff Davis from Kentucky, and Mike Conaway and Kenny Marchant from Texas had spent the previous day touring Iraq and paid a visit to Kabul earlier in the day before coming to Sharana to finish their tour.

They were given a quick tour of the small PRT and then ate a kabab lunch while being briefed on operations in



Spc. Laura E. Griffin

Lt. Col. Timothy McGuire, Battalion Commander, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, welcomes a visiting congressional delegation to Sharana PRT. The delegation consisted of members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

See "delegation" page 9

First Combat Action Badges awarded

Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Matsushige
Combined Task Force Devil PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan - The first Combat Action Badge awarded in Afghanistan was pinned on Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Tavernaro, of Battery C, 3rd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, by Maj. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV, commander of the 82nd Airborne Division.

Caldwell, reenlisted Tavernaro and 10 other soldiers at the Brigade headquarters.

After serving 9 and-a-half years in the in the 82nd Airborne, and on his 3rd deployment, Tavernaro had no doubts about reenlisting for 6 years.

Caldwell congratulated and spoke with Tavernaro and it was discovered that Tavernaro was in hostile fire in Kandahar in Operation Enduring Freedom in 2003. Command Sgt. Maj. Wolf Amacker, Division command sergeant major who was present during the fight verified Tavernaro's story.

Caldwell called his aid to bring the CAB and pinned Tavernaro on the spot.

"Serving in the same unit has its plus and minus," said Tavenaro. "On one hand I don't get to see what the rest of the Army is like, but I'm in the 82nd Airborne."

"The operation-tempo for this unit is intense," said Tavenaro, "It's like a train



Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Matsushige

Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Tavernaro, of Battery C, 3rd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, the first Soldier in country to be awarded the Combat Action Badge, is congratulated by Division Command Sgt. Maj., Wolf Amacker, and applauded by Maj. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV, Division commander.

going 100 miles per hour that doesn't stop. Training keeps going on, and that makes the Soldiers better."

Tavernaro first deployed in 1999, serving in the liberation of Kosovo. His first deployment to Afghanistan was in 2003. The artillery cannons were placed in Bagram, Asadabad, Jalalabad and Kandahar, and Tavenaro saw action in each place.

"It was really different then," said Tavernaro recalling the almost daily bombardment of rockets or mortar fire in Afghanistan.

"There's a big change since the last deployment," said Tavernaro speaking

about this 3rd deployment. "The contact is not as prevalent as before. I've seen the Afghans take more responsibility for their country, with their police and army."

Tavenaro has twin sons Alexander and Xavier who were born on the scheduled day of his 3rd deployment. Fortunately his deployment date was delayed for three weeks.

"The 1st Sgt squared me away and I was able to be with my wife and spend time with my sons," said Tavenaro.

Staff Sgt. George Martinez and Sgt. Damien Mattocks also of 3rd Bn. were awarded the CAB during the ceremony too.



The Combat Action Badge

Raven TUAV is eyes in the sky



Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke

Spc. Jordan H. Rhodes, a Sellersville, Pa., native and intelligence specialist launches the Raven unmanned arial vehicle.

Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke
Editor

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan-As Spc. Jordan H. Rhodes, a Sellersville, Pa., native and intelligence specialist with Company A, 313th Military Intelligence Battalion, launched the small plane into the sky with a hard throw and the crowd of local children from a Khowst, Afghanistan, school cheered in excitement. As the aircraft climbed high

above the school it was easy to see why they were so excited. The remote-controlled airplane could easily be mistaken for a toy.

However, the Raven is not a toy, said Spc. Luke A. Harms, a Springfield, Ill., native and intelligence specialist also with Co. A.

"The Raven is a small, portable, unmanned aerial vehicle system that the infantry can take with them and deploy from the field," Harms said.

See "Raven" page 8

Lizard terrorizes finance office

Spc. Laura E. Griffin

Assistant Editor

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan - Many types of wildlife live alongside the Soldiers and Airmen stationed on Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan. It is inevitable that some critters will unexpectedly find their way into the

buildings where the humans work and play. One such incident happened in the finance building July 19.

First Sergeant Russell J. Christiana with 510th Postal Company was walking out of the finance building's back door when he saw a large lizard sitting just to his left.

"I jumped then he jumped," said Christiana. "He ran right into the

building through the open door."

The lizard ran through the back offices and into the front office, sending the Soldiers scrambling to their desks.

Sgt. 1st Class Lee C. Russell, a deputy dispersing officer and noncommissioned officer in charge of Detachment B, 208th Finance Battalion, was one of those desktop dwellers in the office that day.

"This is the most excitement this place has seen since we've been here," Russell said. "It just came right in the back door and we chased it around the room before it ran into the cashier's cage and under the safe."

The lizard hid safely under the safe for about 15 minutes before someone finally called Kellogg, Brown and Root employees to extract it.

Scott W. Sabin and Max A. Cruz, both KBR security officers, arrived at the bizarre scene about three minutes after receiving the call.

The two men, with the assistance of some of the finance employees, worked for about 20 to 30 minutes to pry the lizard from his safe hiding place. Sabin was finally able to snare the lizard around the neck with a noose attached to a pole.

"He was pretty big, probably about four feet from head to tail," said Sabin. "He was real squirrely; he kept turning



Spc. Laura E. Griffin

A lizard snared by Kellogg, Brown and Root animal control specialists sits in a cage awaiting transportation to be released away from the finance office it terrorized.

See "Lizard" page 6



Pfc. Mike Pryor

Red Falcons on patrol...

A Task Force Red Falcon paratrooper pulls security during a sunset operation near Gahzni, Afghanistan. TF Red Falcon deployed to Operation Enduring Freedom last month to boost security for the upcoming parliamentary elections.

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and twisting and hissing at us. He was not happy at all."

Cruz used another noose to secure the lizard's feet and the two men carried it out to a large dog cage they had setup outside.

"He fought us real hard to not go in the cage," said Cruz, "but we got him in there and got the door closed."

Once inside the cage, the

lizard started running around trying to find a way out through the cage bars. It hissed at the growing crowd of spectators who had climbed down from their desktops and those who had just stopped by to see what was going on.

After taking a few pictures with the irritated lizard, the KBR workers loaded the cage into the back of their pickup truck and took it down to the outskirts of the FOB near the cemetery where they

released it back into the wild.

Rick A. Martinez, the KBR Safety Coordinator, said the finance office workers did the right thing by calling his office.

"These lizards are not venomous, but they are aggressive when cornered and their bite will give you a bacterial infection," said Martinez. "They serve an important role in the environment here because they help control the rodent population, so we

try not to kill them when we catch them."

The KBR Safety Office gets all kinds of calls to remove potential dangers like animals and explosives said Sabin.

"We get calls for snakes, unexploded ordinance, dogs and of course lizards," he said. "We're multi-function like that."

The KBR Safety Office can be reached for all of your extraction needs at DSN 851-0138.

2/3 welcomes new commander

1stLt. Anthony Del Signore

Combined Task Force Devil PAO

JALALABAD AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - Surrounded by the eastern Afghan mountains and amongst the hot, dusty, dry wind, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines, 3rd Marine Division held its change of command ceremony here July 15.

The Marines welcomed Lt. Col. James E. Donnellan and bid farewell to Lt. Col. Andrew R. MacMannis as the battalion colors were passed along.

"Marines of 2/3, you have a great reputation. I am only hopping on the train with you," said Donnellan to his Marines. "I hope to give the title of commanding officer justice."

Donnellan previously served as the ground and expeditionary operation officer for Marine Forces Atlantic and will be taking over a battalion that has been involved in the Global War on Terrorism in Afghanistan for approximately one month.

Donnellan also recognized his family after the ceremony and thanked them for their sacrifices.

"My family has really sacrificed as much or more than I have," said Donnellan. "I am doing what I signed up to do, and what I love to do...That is not what my wife signed up for and that's not what my kids signed up for, so they are really making a huge sacrifice and I really appreciate it."

Col. Patrick Donahue, commanding officer of Regional Command East, Afghanistan, also welcomed Donnellan and gave praise to the Marines he is now in charge of.

"This is an important day in the history of 2/3 Marines and the [Combine Joint Area of Operations]," said Donahue "The Marines look magnificent today as always."



Sgt. Robert Storm

The departing commanding officer of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines, Lt. Col. Andrew MacMannis (left), stands at attention after passing the battalion colors to the new commanding officer Lt. Col. James Donnellan (background) as Sgt. Maj. R.J. Lafleur Jr. awaits to return the colors. The Change of Command ceremony was held July 15 in Jalalabad, Afghanistan.

"Lt. Col. Jim Donnellan welcome to Devil Task Force," continued Donahue. "You have a great reputation, and I know you will lead well. What I charge you to do is take this high performing unit and build upon the solid foundation [Lt.] Col. MacMannis left you and continue to excel. Most importantly, I want you to find and defeat the enemy of the Government of Afghanistan."

MacMannis has been the commanding officer of 2/3 since July 2003 and was awarded his fourth Meritorious Service Medal by Col. Chris Blanchard, commanding officer, Marine Coordination Element, Afghanistan, for his service.

MacMannis left his Marines with this piece of advice:

"You Marines need to stick to the basics, and continue doing what you know is right," said MacMannis. "You know your job, and you know how to instill discipline in those you lead."

"Enjoy your time here as well," continued MacMannis. "There are times you can enjoy yourselves with the local Afghan people, and you should take advantage of every opportunity that you have out here."

MacMannis will be moving on to Washington D.C. where he will attend the National Defense University.

Terrorists fire-bomb girls school in Logar

Master Sgt. Geoffrey Carter
Combined Task Force Devil PAO

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan- Last month a Civil Affairs team from the Gardez Provincial Reconstruction Team visited the Padkhwai Raghani Girl's School in Logar Province. Their visit was not to witness a typical school day filled with 560 girl students and their 14 teachers, but rather to witness a hate crime.

On June 22nd arsonists forced their way into the school under cover of night and held the caretaker and a teacher at bay while they proceeded to set the school on fire.

These arsonists were intent on totally burning down the school, because it was teaching young girls how to read and write and be able to think independently. The school's fire was fueled by ignorance and hidden political agendas.

Himet, the school's night watchman, was saddened by this deliberate act of terrorism. This wanton destruction of a place meant for higher learning was nothing compared to another horror he witnessed.

"I being a Muslim would like to say that whatever happened to that school is completely against Islam, Quaran, and against everything our holy prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) has said." He related through an interpreter that he saw the arsonists seek out copies of the Holy Quaran and set three copies of them on fire.

Local neighbors helped clean up the school the next day so that the children



Master Sgt. Geoffrey Carter

The Padkhwai Raghani Girl's School located in Logar Province 25 km northwest of Gardez Village was fire bombed on June 22nd by educational terrorists. Until the damage is repaired the 560 girl students and 14 teachers make due with tent coverage and dirt yards so as not to interrupt the ir education. Three Quarans were intentionally destroyed during the fire by the arsonists.

could return to class immediately, Himet said.

A member of the Gardez Civil Affairs team, Maj. Randy Castillo, praised Himet for being courageous enough to continue his work the following day at the Padkhwai Raghani Girl's School.

"I couldn't believe that someone, particularly a person of the Muslim faith, would destroy a religious book. I myself am Baptist and view religious books as sacred. In my view people who have little value for education and religion are another type of terrorist." Castillo said as he assessed damage to the school.

One teacher who lives at the school was also restrained and witnessed the desecration of the Quaran and the burning of the school house. To add insult to injury both he and the night watchman, who live at the school, lost all of their personal property in the attack.

"Allah the almighty in Quaran says, 'Say! Can those people who are educated be equal to those that are uneducated?' It means that they who are educated are not equal to those that are not educated. Allah the almighty likes those that are educated, because those who are educated know God better and God's rules and regulations better than uneducated people," the teacher said.

He continued, "So it goes with out saying that education is an essential need for Muslims whether they are men or women. If

someone says that education is only required for men, that person is absolutely wrong because the Quaran is for all Muslims both men and women."

Himet added, "The Quaran encourages all Muslims to get knowledge. There is a saying of our Prophet Muhammad that all Muslim men and women are obligated to get knowledge. In addition, Our Prophet Muhammad has said, 'Get knowledge even if it is in China.' Meaning the Prophet was encouraging Muslims (men and women) to get knowledge even if they had to travel to find a school."

Both men were equally shocked and confused by this act of terrorism against the teachings of Muhammad (PBUH). "As a result, what can we say or call a person that would burn a school where girls go to get knowledge? A Muslim? A Mujahed? We call this person a criminal who does not obey Allah the almighty, does not respect Islam, and does not follow the orders of Prophet."

After the Gardez PRT assessed the school's damage they began the process of finding and hiring local contractors to rebuild the school.

In the meantime all the students will sit outside, in the dirt, under a tent in over 100 degree heat so they can pursue their dream of an education.

The end result of this dedication will be an Afghanistan who's people are an active participant in the reconstruction of a free and democratic country.



Master Sgt. Geoffrey Carter

Himet the night watchman who was held back while arsonists set the school on fire. He is receiving blankets from a Gardez PRT soldier since all of his personal belongings were destroyed in the fire.

Raven

from page 4

The Raven has cameras mounted for surveillance and global positioning systems that make it a versatile and valuable tool in today's war on terror, Harms said.

"It can be used for force protection, reconnaissance of areas too dangerous for troops, battle damage assessment," said Harms. "Useful just about any time you need to see what is going on."

It can even be used to call in mortar fire at night thanks

to its night-vision capabilities and tracking systems, Harms said.

"One time we observed local Afghan Police not properly manning a check-point during a mission in June," Rhodes said.

The system will also help commanders use their troops more effectively.

"(During a previous deployment) we picked up something on our perimeter sensors and had to send out the quick reaction force to check it out," said Rhodes. "It turned out to be nothing more than a goat stuck in

the wire."

"In that situation we would have been able to send out the Raven and confirm it wasn't something we need to send the QRF to," he added.

Even with all the system's features, its biggest advantage is being something that can be fielded and used by troops immediately when needed.

"In the past UAV support had to be coordinated through headquarters," said Harms. "Now the patrol leader can decide and deploy it immediately when needed."

Even with the Raven's capabilities already being used on the battlefield, Harms said that it is still a new system that will take some time for operators to learn the most effective ways to use it.

Rhodes and Harms completed training to use the system just weeks before deploying and have been some of the first from Combined Task Force Devil to use it during missions. Future plans are to train Soldiers from each infantry company to operate the system.

Soldiers graduate TCCC class

Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Matsushige

Combined Task Force Devil PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan- Twenty-four soldiers are better trained to render aid to their battle-buddy, should their buddy be suffering from dehydration, a severed artery or the infamous sucking chest wound. The Paratrooper Tactical Medical Course, an intense 5-day, 40-hour course, culminated with a graduation ceremony at the base chapel.

The tactical combat casualty caregivers learned additional combat life saving techniques and use of the individual package lifesaving kit which will be issued to all 82nd Airborne Division paratroopers.

"One big change was the reversal of the ABC's or airway, breathing and circulation or bleeding," said course instructor Sgt. Carrie Sullivan, of company C, 307th Logistic Task Force.

According to Task Force Devil Surgeon, Maj. Cory Costello, in today's battlefield, preventing loss of irreplaceable blood and use of a decompression needle to reverse a lung collapsed, caused by a hole in the chest cavity, would save 20% of the potential casualties. So in many cases, the tactical combat casualty caregivers will check for, and stop the bleeding first.

"The instructors were fabulous," said graduate, Sgt. Keith Rice of the 69th transportation company, 28th Transportation Battalion based in Germany, "The hands on

portion of the course, doing the intravenous needle poke and loading an "injured" person on a Blackhawk with the blades going was a highlight."

Cardio pulmonary resuscitation, using the Israeli compression bandage, and learning needle decompression to inflate a lung, were some of the added training.

Sgt. 1st Class David Limbaugh of Task Force Saber Aviation was the distinguished graduate. The graduates received 82nd Airborne pins and course completion certificates presented by the Lt. Col. Johnny J. Johnson and Command Sgt, Major Nathan J. Hunt, of the 307th Logistic Task Force.

"To keep in practice, you should give an I.V. at least once a year," said course instructor Sgt. Chad Johnson, of company C, 307th Logistic Task Force.

"You can come down to the clinic to practice," added Johnson, "just bring your battle buddy to practice on."



Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Matsushige

Above, twenty-four graduates of Class 07-05 the 5-day Paratrooper Tactical Medical Course at Forward Operating Base Salerno. Right, Sgt. 1st Class David Limbaugh of Task Force Saber Aviation receives his certificate and was named as the distinguished graduate of the course.



Delegation from page 3

Paktika Province by Lt. Col. Timothy McGuire, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment Commander.

"Here, so close to the Pakistan border, our community projects help to counter terrorism by empowering the local government and people," McGuire told them. "One thing that is so important to making our overall mission successful is ensuring that the upcoming elections are safe and fair; that the people - all the people - can know that their vote will count."

To ensure that the upcoming elections are secure, McGuire's men are continually pushing the Anti-Coalition Militants out of Afghanistan.

"We're taking the fight to the border," said McGuire. "Keeping the ACM out of Afghanistan lets the people inside the boarder prosper. This is so important here in the Paktika Province; because of its isolation, there are many fence-sitters."

"But the best weapons system that I have is projects," said McGuire.

The evidence of the success of their projects in this region is best exemplified by the life-saving act of one small Afghan boy.

"We had a convoy coming here from Orgun-E about a week ago," said McGuire. "It's normal to see children running up to greet the passing convoys, but one boy was running faster than the others and trying to get our attention. I stopped the convoy and asked the boy what was the matter. He told us that there was an (Improvised

Explosive Device) planted on the road ahead of us. We sent a team to check it out and there was in fact one there. I asked the boy why he told us about it. He said, 'I know that you are bringing schools to this area. Right now I sit under a tree for class, but soon I will have a school.'"

McGuire, in his final remarks, summed up his feelings about the importance of the mission here.

"This is every bit as important as World War II," he said. "This is our generation's call to arms, and we are fighting this battle now so that our children will not have to in the future."

When the briefing was finished, the representatives were led outside where they had a chance to talk to some of the soldiers from the states they represent.

Representative Davis, a 1981 West Point graduate, had the chance to visit with a family friend stationed in Forward Operating Base Orgun-E who had the opportunity to come to Sharana to see Davis.

Capt. Joe C. Geraci, Company A Commander, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, whose father knows Davis from volunteering at the West Point Society, was honored to be able to see Davis and personally tell him

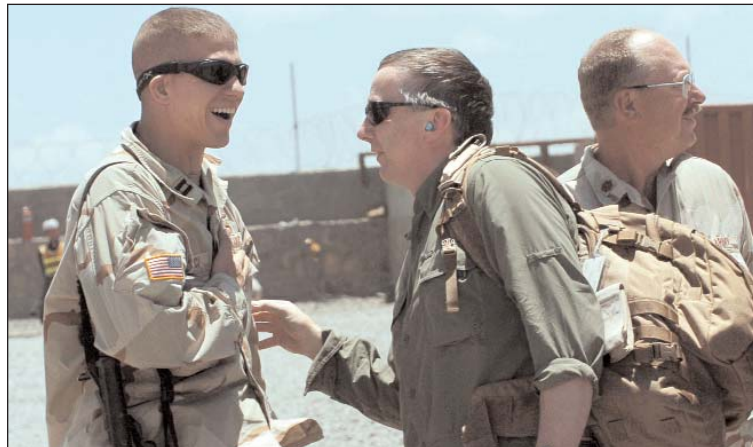
about his company's roll in the re-raising of an Afghan flag in the Bermel district.

"The district had been without any government presence for the past 15 months," said Geraci. "We went in with the Afghan National Army April 27 through June 2 and successfully restored the overthrown government there."

Davis was moved by the work going on here and echoed McGuire's sentiments about the historical significance of this war.

"This is a testament to the rule of law," said Davis. "We were able to drive the Taliban into political irrelevance, it's a revolutionary thing to see. Getting to come here and see this is one of the high points of my service."

"We are such a small part in the wash of history," he said. "We've got to make a difference while we have the opportunity."



Spc. Laura E. Griffin

Capt. Joe C. Geraci, Company A commander, 1st Battalion, 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, greets Representative Geoff Davis from Kentucky July 9 at Sharana PRT.



Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke

Rangers pray at the memorial ceremony for Pfc. Damian J. Garza and Pfc. John M. Henderson Aug. 8, at Forward Operating Base Salerno, Afghanistan.

Memorial

from page 3

National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Combat Infantryman Badge and Parachutist Badge.

Garza and Henderson's fellow Rangers continue to conduct combat operations in order provide a more safe and secure Afghanistan.

Their sacrifice helped ensure that Afghanistan will never again become a safe haven or training ground for terrorists such as those that launched the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center towers and the Pentagon.

Up Front & Centered: Are you making a difference?

By Master Sgt. Geoffrey Carter
Combined Task Force Devil PAO

I was in the Forward Operation Base, Salerno Dining Facility and had the pleasure of being assisted by Daniel Gibson who works there. He went about his duties, as he always does, with a friendly smile and professional attitude. When I was in the salad line he came up to me and said, "To thine own self be true." He made my day.

I had written about soldier and civilian's work ethics in the June 18th issue of the Desert Devil Dispatch and had used that quote from Shakespeare's Hamlet. I was thrilled that Ronnie had taken the time to read the article but more so that he had gained something from it. I had made a difference.

How often are we so wrapped up in our own work that we lose touch with whether or not we even make a difference? More importantly, how many of us take the time with the people we see every day to let them know they make a difference. My guess is not enough.

It's up to all of us to make a difference, even if it is to only one person at a time, because that will give value to their efforts.

I work with a great team here at the

504th Parachute Infantry Regiment's Public Affairs office on Forward Operating Base Salerno. One of the products the office produces is the Desert Devil Dispatch that makes a difference, to soldiers here in Regional Command East and their Family Support Group back at Fort Bragg, every day.

Our Editor, Sgt. Charles Meseke, designs and puts together this newsletter every two weeks plus every other journalistic need that arises. He goes outside the wire and covers stories about other paratroopers' even if it means climbing mountains and sleeping on rocks under the stars. He makes a difference.

Our Assistant Editor Spc. Laura Griffin writes and takes photographs about soldier stories every week and sometimes outside the wire where she has taken direct fire. Griffin is also our resident Photoshop wizard who gives of her free time helping other sections in the command with design work on certificates and posters. She makes a difference.

Capt. Dwayne Wirfel, the Public Affairs Officer, juggles meetings, briefings and escorting of distinguished visitors and still finds time to put music videos together for the command in his spare time. He makes a difference.

Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Matsushige is new to Salerno but before he came here he was working for our PA office in the Jalalabad Provincial Reconstruction Team writing three to four stories a week about all the great things they are doing for the Afghan people. He makes a difference.

Everyone in the 504th PIR deserves daily recognition for the hard work they do because they too make a difference. Just ask Master Sgt. Joseph Wolfe whose brigade level retention office has averaged 130% of their numbers for the past five years. He makes a difference.

Sgt. Shane Duffy, Base Ops Non Commissioned Officer for Morale, Welfare and Recreation spends his spare time going one step further for the soldiers of FOB Salerno. He and a few of his soldiers built a movie tent and organized a movie distribution system with AAFES so that soldiers here could watch first run movies for free. He makes a difference.

My point is that every soldier and civilian working here in Afghanistan in Operation Enduring Freedom is making a difference. My question to you is, "What do you plan to do to make a difference in the work you perform or the effect you have on someone else's life?" Remember that to give value to someone or something you have to GIVE.

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tion security.

"They literally got it within days of leaving," he added.

Caldwell assured troops that despite the various rumors circulating about the deployment timeline for the task force, they were still scheduled for a year long deployment and upon return would be stabilized in order to complete the transition to a "unit of action."

Army plans call for brigades to form self contained units that would be easier to deploy and train.

Although the questions at each stop were different, the final messages from the Division commander and command sergeant major were always similar.

"You guys are doing a fantastic job over here," Caldwell said to paratroopers in Gahzni.

"Everyone back home is real proud of you," echoed Amacker to the base's paratrooper filled dining facility.

Caldwell and Amacker said they hope to visit the troops again later this year.



Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke

Maj. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV, left, 82nd Airborne Division commander, is briefed by Capt. Patrick Malone, commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment Aug. 5.